



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Center for Advanced Studies
in Measurement and Assessment

210 Lindquist Center
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1529
319-335-5439 Fax 319-384-0505
coe-casma@uiowa.edu
www.education.uiowa.edu/casma

November 16, 2012

Barry Butler, Provost
University of Iowa

Dear Barry,

Thank you for meeting with the faculty and staff of the College of Education last Wednesday. I know this is not an easy situation for you to deal with, and I trust you realize it is extraordinarily difficult as well for the faculty and staff of the College of Education, including me personally. I am going to be very specific and direct in this letter so there can be no misunderstanding about what I mean, which unfortunately makes the letter longer than I would like. Importantly, I want you to know that I will not share this letter with anyone else. I would ask that you not do so either, without my permission, but I will grant that permission under conditions that afford me reasonable protection.

I suspect you have heard about me, but to the best of my recollection, we have not met privately before. My vita is readily available to you, I'm sure, but most of it is probably only marginally relevant for the present circumstances. In particular, I would think that you will need to judge the extent to which the facts I relay are truthful, and the opinions I express are at least credible and grounded in some degree of knowledge and experience. To that end, if you feel the need to do so, I do not object to your contacting anyone about me, including persons outside the University.

The contentious issues involving Margaret have arisen in the context of her administrative role. Accordingly, you may legitimately wonder about my background and its relevance to the matters at hand. In that regard, a brief snapshot of my professional positions may be appropriate. After completing my graduate program at Harvard in 1970, I was an assistant professor at Stony Brook for five years. Then I went to ACT for 16 years where I had a series of positions almost all of which involved, in part, administrative responsibilities. I came to the University of Iowa in 1994 as E. F. Lindquist Chair and Director of ITP. My tenure in ITP lasted about 10 years until I became the founding director of CASMA. As I expect you know, my leaving ITP was definitely not amicable, and I have plenty of scars to show for it. Should you ever want to discuss that part of my time at the University, I am willing to do so, but that is not the purpose of this letter. Without doubt I am primarily a researcher in educational measurement, but I have about 30 years of mid-level

administrative experience. I hope my background will give you some confidence that my comments are informed by at least some degree of administrative experience at the UI and elsewhere.

Provided below are three examples of problems I have experienced with Margaret. In relating these problems I have tried very hard to separate facts from judgments/opinions.

Firing of Tim Ansley

Prior to this fall, I did not know that DEOs had been given five-year appointments. I agree that a blanket awarding of such appointments was not wise, and I also readily acknowledge that Margaret has the authority to dismiss a DEO. However, there is a big difference between having authority and having the wisdom to exercise it in a responsible manner that advances the cause of the organization(s) involved (in the case, the College of Education and the University). In my opinion, Margaret used poor judgment in the manner she chose to deal with this issue, as it involves the Department of Psychological and Quantitative Foundations (P&Q). Specifically, I want to address four steps in the order that they occurred.

First, this fall the DEO for P&Q, Tim Ansley, was directed by Margaret to call a meeting of the P&Q faculty at which he told us that Margaret had directed him to gather the names of nominees for DEO. Margaret did not tell us beforehand that Tim was being fired at the end of this academic year, she did not come to the meeting and tell us herself, and she did not provide any explanation of Tim's performance that would suggest that firing was merited. The faculty were outraged, and voted unanimously to retain Tim.

Second, the faculty asked me to write a brief letter indicating the unanimous vote, and four faculty agreed to present the letter in person to Margaret. Margaret, however, refused to meet with the faculty. A few days later she changed her mind, met with the four faculty, and set up a subsequent meeting with the full P&Q faculty.

Third, prior to the P&Q meeting with Margaret, she called me to her office for the purpose of trying to influence me to prevail upon my colleagues to support her in her attempts to get a new DEO. I told her that as a matter of personal conviction, I do not play those kinds of games. At that meeting, I asked her explicitly if she was going to conduct a review of Tim; she said she would not. She also led me to believe that if P&Q did not pick someone to her liking, she would go outside P&Q to get someone "for her team."

Fourth, Margaret met with the P&Q faculty and told us in very unambiguous terms that: (1) she would not under any circumstances accept Tim as DEO; (2) she would, without qualification, accept anyone else we selected; and (3) she would provide us with a two-page description of her view on roles and responsibilities for any new DEO. No such written document has been forthcoming to the best of my knowledge; and the P&Q faculty has not yet had a vote on any new DEO.

The statements in the above four paragraphs are accurate to the best of my recollection. The comments in the next few paragraphs are my opinions.

I believe Tim has done a very good job as DEO, which does not mean I always agree with him. When he initially became DEO I had a concern that he might let his role in ITP overly influence his role as DEO. I don't think that has been a major problem

Even if Sandy Damico acted imprudently in giving Tim a five-year appointment, that does not explain or justify the manner in which Margaret handled the matter. At a bare minimum she should have met with the P&Q faculty at the beginning of the process. If she had done so, there would still be some ruffled feathers, I am sure (Tim has strong support among the P&Q faculty), but these contentious matters could have been contained, I believe, rather than being allowed (indeed, almost encouraged) to fester.

Throughout this process, on several occasions Margaret made statements such as, "I have talked to Barry about this," or "I have the support of Jessup Hall." I have two problems with such statements. First, I have no doubt that, if Margaret asked you if she had the authority to dismiss a DEO, you would have told her she did. However, her comments suggested to me that she thought you (or someone in your office) at least tacitly supported this process, too. If that is correct, then I can only say that the process was needlessly disruptive and confrontational, and it benefited no one; if we disagree about that, we will have to agree to disagree.

Second, in my experience, it is generally poor practice for an administrator to repeatedly justify his or her decisions based on references to the support of his or her supervisor. It can easily suggest weakness in the administrator, and it potentially puts the supervisor in an awkward position, which I think has happened in this case.

Salary Administration

Last spring I made an appointment with Margaret to tell her that I was seriously considering applying for phased retirement sometime during this year (i.e., 2012). I will be 69 in May, my retirement is on the horizon, and I thought that it would be helpful to Margaret to inform her, especially since whatever retirement plans I make will have a direct affect on CASMA and the Measurement and Statistics program, as well as an affect on the College of Education.

On June 28 I was notified by Margaret that my salary increment would be 2%, which I considered quite low given the salary guidelines and how productive I have been recently, but I decided to let it pass. Then Tim Ansley came to see me and told me that his recommended increment for me was considerably greater than what I received, which he felt was especially perplexing since only 20% of my salary involves state money (70% from the funds supporting the Lindquist Chair and 10% from contracts). I still decided to let the matter rest. (I did not ask Tim, and he did not volunteer, the actual increment he recommended.)

Then in the P&Q meeting with Margaret that I discussed previously (paragraph beginning "Fourth..."), when Margaret responded to a question about salaries, she said she lowered recommended salary increments for faculty who were planning to retire because, she said in essence, faculty were generally not very productive if they were planning to retire. I will admit I was very disturbed, although I kept silent. First, it is my understanding that the Regents have stated that salary increments for faculty (and staff) should be based on merit, which means what the faculty member has accomplished, not what an administrator thinks the faculty might accomplish in the future. Second, Margaret's decision could be construed as age discrimination. I think I could make a very credible, formal complaint about this matter, but it is not my intent to do so. It is too easy for such a complaint to be construed as merely "sour grapes," especially since I am a relatively highly paid faculty member.

What concerns me more than the financial penalty I paid, is the rationale Margaret used and the process she followed in making decisions. Undoubtedly, the money she took from me was distributed to others, which I think very likely contributed to the skewing of final salary increments relative to the recommended ones. In short, Margaret probably violated Regents policy and undermined the salary recommendation procedures within the College, which contributed to considerable anger about salary administration this year.

Note that, for various reasons (including the matters discussed in this letter), I have decided to delay (phased) retirement plans. I am certainly reluctant to keep Margaret informed about any retirement plans I may have until I am absolutely certain about the exact timing.

Measurement and Statistics Faculty Line

The Measurement and Statistics (M&S) program is understaffed currently. With the departure of an additional faculty member, the program will be even further understaffed next fall.

In the fall of 2011, M&S was granted permission to search for a junior faculty member. The search did not identify a viable candidate, and we were told that the search would be extended for an additional year, with formal recruiting beginning this fall (2012). Accordingly, I (among others, I believe) started an informal process of talking to well-connected persons in the field about possible candidates. Then, shortly after returning from the AERA and NCME Annual Meetings in April, I found out that the search had been terminated without any explanation or consultation with the DEO, the coordinator of the M&S program, or anyone else in the program, as far as I can ascertain.

This lack of consultation, explanation, and communication is a too frequent hallmark of how Margaret chooses to run the College. In this particular instance, the decision and failure to communicate has truly disadvantaged the M&S program.

Concluding Comments

In the 18 years since I have been here, I have never seen any dean (or anyone else, for that matter), so quickly and decisively alienate so many faculty and staff. Faculty and staff seldom approach me with complaints about others, but in Margaret's case the complaints have been numerous, intense, and in many cases from people who rarely complain.

I have been an administrator long enough to know that there are some people who are simply not well-suited for the role and responsibilities that administration involves. Regrettably, I think Margaret is one of those persons, but perhaps I am wrong. If so, then Margaret must quickly establish a productive working relationship with faculty and staff, particularly senior faculty. I do not believe any dean can be very successful without the support of senior faculty, and right now such support is clearly lacking.

I know from conversations with others outside the University that the problems with Margaret are becoming known in corners of the country. Almost certainly, the vote that recently occurred will make these problems more visible pretty quickly. (The upcoming holidays will slow dissemination of information/complaints for a while, but not too long.) As trite as the metaphor sounds, the bleeding needs to stop as quickly as possible. These problems are hurting the reputation of the College and the University, they are leading to talented people leaving the College, and they will almost certainly make recruitment of talented people much more difficult than it otherwise would be.

I am sure it is painful for you to read this letter. If it is any consolation, it was probably just as painful for me to write it

Sincerely,

Robert L. Brennan
E. F. Lindquist Chair in Measurement and Testing
Director, Center for Advanced Studies in Measurement and Assessment (CASMA)

Butler, Patrick B

From: Butler, Patrick B
Sent: Monday, December 03, 2012 10:17 AM
To: Thomas, Volker (volker-thomas@uiowa.edu); Morony, Michael J
Cc: Butler, Patrick Barry (patrick-butler@uiowa.edu)
Subject: request

Volker and Mike,

With respect to the message below, please collect and turn over to me all records of the anonymous comments from the College of Education Faculty and Staff Council's version of the "Working at Iowa" survey. The materials will become part of Dean Crocco's personnel file. Please provide a follow-up email confirmation when you have completed the transfer.

Thank you.

P. Barry Butler
Executive Vice President and Provost
111 Jessup Hall
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
(319) 335-3565
patrick-butler@uiowa.edu

From: Butler, Patrick B
Sent: Monday, December 03, 2012 10:11 AM
To: Hass, Bettina A
Cc: Butler, Patrick B
Subject: Please distribute to CoED Faculty/Staff

College of Education Faculty and Staff:

I want to thank those of you who participated in the College of Education Faculty and Staff Council's version of the "Working at Iowa" survey. Quantitative results from the twelve survey questions will be shared with faculty and staff in a follow-up communication from the leadership of your Faculty and Staff Councils. With respect to the anonymous comments, I've instructed Dr. Jude West to orally communicate the nature of the comments to you as part of his consultation process. I have been advised by the University of Iowa Office of General Counsel that, as is the case for reviews of administrators, the verbatim language of comments submitted through this survey are part of the individual's personnel file and are not public information.

Thanks again as we move forward.

P. Barry Butler
Executive Vice President and Provost
111 Jessup Hall
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
(319) 335-3565
patrick-butler@uiowa.edu

From: Crocco, Margaret
Sent: Sunday, December 02, 2012 3:23 PM
To: Butler, Patrick B
Cc: margaret.crocco@gmail.com
Subject: WAI survey

Dear Barry:

Although you seem to have agreed with me yesterday that the comments not be made public, I just want to reiterate that I feel strongly that the survey results, particularly the comments, are critical to my professional reputation. Therefore, please let me know what Carroll decides as soon as it is decided. I need to consider my rights should she choose to release the comments. As stated yesterday, I am not opposed to releasing the quantitative data, as has been done in the past with other university-sponsored WAI surveys.

I am putting trust in Carroll that she is strongly considering my professional interests as part of this situation. I would hate to have it come to the point that I need to involve an outside attorney in this matter, but I might be forced to do so if I feel that the decision made by Carroll is not in my best interests.

Please feel free to call me at any time to discuss this further.

Margaret

Dean and Professor
College of Education, University of Iowa
459 Lindquist Center North
Iowa City, IA 52242-1529
319.335.5380, phone
319.335.5386, fax
margaret-crocco@uiowa.edu
www.education.uiowa.edu

Butler, Patrick B

From: Butler, Patrick B
Sent: Monday, December 03, 2012 7:09 AM
To: 'Margaret Crocco'
Subject: RE: DRAFT holiday email -- Barry, what do you think? I would send this week or next; let me know which timing you think is better

Margaret,

This is a strong gesture of healing on your part. Go for it! No reason to delay.

P. Barry Butler
Executive Vice President and Provost
111 Jessup Hall
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
(319) 335-3565
patrick-butler@uiowa.edu

-----Original Message-----

From: Margaret Crocco [<mailto:margaret.crocco@gmail.com>]
Sent: Sunday, December 02, 2012 10:31 AM
To: margaret.crocco@gmail.com; Butler, Patrick B
Subject: DRAFT holiday email -- Barry, what do you think? I would send this week or next; let me know which timing you think is better

Dear College of Education faculty and staff:

Our Jewish friends use a wonderful phrase to describe an important goal of their faith: "tikkun o'lam" -- "to repair the world." I have always loved this phrase since it states so eloquently the need for all of us to try to address the many fractures, fissures, conflicts, and hurts that, sadly, characterize the human condition.

In that spirit and in the spirit of the holiday season, I would like to reach out via this email to each of you to ask that you help me repair our relationship.

As I did at the outset of my time here, I am once again inviting anyone who wants to come in and talk with me one-on-one to do so at your convenience, now, if possible, or after the semester break.

I promise to listen carefully to what you have to say. I cannot promise to agree with everything I hear or to do all that is asked. My responsibilities as a dean involve making an independent judgment on matters, but I will assuredly try to do a better job of letting you all know directly the reasons for my decisions.

Through these encounters, I hope you will help me better understand the culture of this College so that together we can repair the damage done by the conflict of the past month and move forward together.

At a time of the year when so many groups worldwide are celebrating the holiday traditions of their own culture and are looking forward with great anticipation to a new year, I would hope that we can use the opportunity provided by this season of expectation to repair our relationship and move forward together.

Yours truly,
Margaret Crocco

Butler, Patrick B

From: Butler, Patrick B
Sent: Saturday, December 01, 2012 7:42 AM
To: Crocco, Margaret
Subject: RE: meeting?

2:00, my office?

P. Barry Butler
Executive Vice President and Provost
111 Jessup Hall
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
(319) 335-3565
patrick-butler@uiowa.edu

From: Crocco, Margaret
Sent: Friday, November 30, 2012 8:35 PM
To: Butler, Patrick B
Subject: Re: meeting?

Sure. Just name the time and place.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 30, 2012, at 5:40 PM, "Butler, Patrick B" <patrick-butler@uiowa.edu> wrote:

Margaret,

Would early afternoon on Saturday work for a meeting? I depart for Indy around 3:00 pm and don't return until Monday morning. I can also take a call along the drive.

P. Barry Butler
Executive Vice President and Provost
111 Jessup Hall
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
(319) 335-3565
patrick-butler@uiowa.edu

From: Crocco, Margaret
Sent: Friday, November 30, 2012 4:44 PM
To: Butler, Patrick B
Subject: meeting?

Hi, Barry:
Would it be possible to get together later on Saturday or any time on Sunday?
Margaret

Dean and Professor
College of Education, University of Iowa
459 Lindquist Center North
Iowa City, IA 52242-1529
319.335.5380, phone
319.335.5386, fax
margaret-crocco@uiowa.edu
www.education.uiowa.edu

Tally of Ballots

91 were distributed

16 yes (confidence)

44 no (no-confidence)

5 abst.

65 Total

www.education. .edu

Dean Crocco has been with us for just over a year. During this time, a number of concerns have been raised about her leadership style. Dean Crocco has been made aware of these concerns several times. There is growing anxiety and evidence that her style of leadership is having a negative effect on the current health and future well-being of this college. Given this, the following question is posed to College of Education faculty:

Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES X

NO _____

ABSTAIN _____

Please submit this ballot directly (not via campus mail) to Professor Volker Thomas, Chairperson of the Faculty Advisory Committee (N370 LC), by 3 P.M. on Friday, November 9.

Overall, I object to this process; however, if it improves dialogue and clears the air, then I can accept this.

Although I believe there have been missed opportunities for discussion and input, on balance, I believe the dean has the knowledge to lead the college. She has the passion and desire. However, she would benefit from more support and advice about interactions when conveying decisions.

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Do you have ^{complete} confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES X

NO _____

ABSTAIN _____

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*this is a move by a very small group
of men in our college who were
privileged under the former
Dean and are now being
asked to work under
new guidelines. I'm deeply
offended by
this
action.*

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES X whole heartedly!

NO _____

ABSTAIN _____

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This vote is being called by a few DEOs + Sr Fac who have been disempowered. They have been undermining Crocco since her arrival. This is appalling.

~~1~~

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES ☒ *Absolutely!*

NO ☐

ABSTAIN ☐

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES X Absolutely

NO _____

ABSTAIN _____

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES X

NO

ABSTAIN

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A ballot that appears in faculty mailboxes in unmarked envelopes is childish and does little to promote a sense of collegiality in the COE. I have no assurances that this "vote" will be properly managed, that there will not be duplicate votes as there is not tracking system, and that the count will be credible. Why not have a meeting of the full faculty and a discussion?

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES ☒

NO ☐

ABSTAIN ☐

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES

NO _____

ABSTAIN _____

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES ☒

NO ☐

ABSTAIN ☐

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES ✓

NO _____

ABSTAIN _____

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES ☒

NO ☐

ABSTAIN ☐

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES X

NO

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES X

NO

ABSTAIN

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YES X

NO

ABSTAIN

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YES

☒

NO

☐

ABSTAIN

☐

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES



NO

ABSTAIN

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YES _____

NO ☒ _____

ABSTAIN _____

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YES _____

NO X _____

ABSTAIN _____

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Do you have confidence in Dean Crocco's leadership as Dean of the College of Education?

YES _____

NO  _____

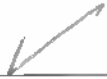
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